

Overview

This lesson will show the connection between settlers in Kansas and the environment. Students will learn how settlers adapted to living in Kansas by learning about the houses they built. In reading the texts as a class, the students will practice choral reading. This lesson is recommended as an extension of the **American Indians Homes in Kansas** *Read Kansas* lesson (P-6). This lesson can be completed in six class periods or can be combined and completed in fewer days.

Standards

History:

Benchmark 2, Indicator 5 The student identifies types of shelter used by early Kansas families (e.g., dugouts, sod houses, log cabins, frame houses).

Geography

Benchmark 5, Indicator 2 The student describes how the physical environment impacts humans (e.g., choices of clothing, housing, crops, recreation).

Reading:

Benchmark 2, Indicator 4 The student uses knowledge of sentence structure to read fluently at instructional or independent reading levels.

Objectives

Content:

- The student demonstrates knowledge of the fact that settlers in Kansas built homes from available resources.
- The student identifies differences and similarities among types of settlers' homes in Kansas.

Skills:

- The student participates in choral reading.
- The student retells expository information.

Essential Questions

- In what ways were settlers' homes different?
- How does the availability of natural resources influence our lives?
- (If used with *Read Kansas* Lesson P-6) What are the similarities between Native American houses and settlers' houses?



Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas* cards:

- **Building a Log Cabin**
- **Building a Sod House**
- **Building a Dugout**
- **Building a Frame House**

Day 1

1. Begin the lesson by introducing the topic of settlers in Kansas and that some of their homes looked different than ours do today, but they served the same purpose.
 - Explain about “long ago” and “today.” Give examples of things that happened long ago (e.g., their great-great-great-grandparents were born, explorer Christopher Columbus sailed to America, people used horses instead of cars for transportation) and today (e.g., they are in first grade, the year is 20__, they ride in cars and school buses).
 - Explain that many settlers built their homes from things found in nature, such as grass, dirt, and sod. These are called natural resources.
2. Start by showing the students the front of the **Building a Log Cabin** card. Read the teacher’s script for establishing prior knowledge on page 4. The information the students hear will assist them in reading on their own.
3. Provide each student with a copy of **Building a Log Cabin**. Read the card out loud as a class several times (choral reading). Have each student read the card to a partner.
4. Have the students complete sentence 1 on the **Prairie Homes** worksheet. Save the worksheet for the next day’s lesson.
5. If you have already done the *Read Kansas* Lesson P-6 (**American Indian Homes in Kansas**) with your class, ask the students to compare and contrast how Indians used natural resources to build their homes compared to the settlers.

Day 2

1. Repeat Day 1 activities using the **Building a Sod House** card and the teacher’s script for establishing prior knowledge on page 4. Students should complete sentence 2 on the **Prairie Homes** worksheet.
2. If your class has done Lesson P-6, ask students to find similarities and differences between the sod house and the Pawnee house.

Day 3

1. Repeat Day 1 activities using the **Building a Dugout** card and the teacher’s script for establishing prior knowledge on page 4. Students should complete sentence 3 on the **Prairie Homes** worksheet.
2. If your class has done Lesson P-6, ask students to find similarities and differences between the dugout and the Pawnee house.

Day 4

1. Repeat Day 1 activities using the **Building a Frame House** card and the teacher's script for establishing prior knowledge on page 5. Students should complete sentence 4 on the **Prairie Homes** worksheet.

Day 5

1. Remind the students that settlers made houses from the resources available to them. Sometimes they used natural resources. Sometimes other resources were available, such as lumber from nearby sawmills or brought in by railroads. This was a resource, however, that they could not produce themselves. For most rural settlers, cut lumber for frame houses was brought to them on the railroad.
2. Play the Kansas **Prairie Homes Memory Game**. Have the students cut out the game pieces. They will have four pieces that depict houses and four pieces that depict Kansas resources. The object of the game is to match the house to the resource. Have students turn their cards face down. Pick a card and then pick a second card trying to match the correct house to the correct resource. If the cards match, put them aside. If they do not match, turn them face down and put them back in the game. To finish the game, students must match all four pairs. Save the game pieces.

Day 6

1. Pass out a copy of the **Where did they live?** map worksheet to all students. Study the map as a class. Find the following:
 - Where are the trees in Kansas?
 - Where is the prairie in Kansas?
 - Where are the low hills in Kansas?
 - Where are the railroads in Kansas?
2. Have the students use the cards of the houses that they cut out for the memory game. There are four pieces. Have the students glue the correct house card over the square showing the appropriate resource.

Assessment

1. Evaluate the students' ability to correctly complete the **Prairie Homes** worksheet.
2. Observe the students' ability to match the house with the resource in the **Prairie Homes Memory Game**.
3. Evaluate the students' ability to place the correct house on the correct resource on the **Where did they live?** worksheet.

For the Teacher

What follows is the script to activate prior knowledge before the students read the respective card.

Script For Activating Prior Knowledge

Building a Log Cabin

If I lived in a log cabin, my house would be built from trees.

Long ago, Kansas was a big, open land. There were no cities or towns and no stores. Many early settlers arrived in covered wagons. They lived in their wagons until they built a house. Some settlers built homes from trees that they cut into logs.

Trees grow well in eastern Kansas. There is more rainfall and there are more rivers. The early settlers cut down trees to make their homes. The ends of the logs had to be notched so they would make a corner when fit together and stacked together to make the walls. Doors and windows were extra work for the builder so they were limited. Some settlers had glass windows, but many did not. A roof was added last.

The house had just one room. Some houses had a second floor or loft upstairs where the children slept.

Building a Sod House

If I lived in a sod house, my house would be made from dirt and grass.

Much of Kansas was once covered with prairie grass. In western Kansas there were few trees. Early settlers adapted to living without trees by using dirt and prairie grass to build their homes.

Prairie grass has thick roots. These roots held the dirt together. Settlers could cut the sod into brick-shaped building blocks. The sod bricks were stacked to make walls. Windows and a door were added along with the roof. Sometimes even the roof was made of sod.

Once the sod was cut from the fields, settlers planted their crops in those fields. Most settlers were farmers.

Settlers needed shelter quickly. Most sod houses had just one room.

Building a Dugout

If I lived in a dugout, my house would be underground. It would be made of dirt.

Settlers who traveled to western Kansas found very few trees. They had to find new ways to build houses without using trees. It is very dry, so they could live underground. These homes were dug into the ground or into a small hill. A door and a window would be the only parts of the house not made of dirt.

Dugouts were small. It took a lot of work to dig a hole in the ground big enough in which to live. Of all the early homes, dugouts were the most uncomfortable. Insects and snakes could crawl through the walls. Dirt would get on everything.

Building a Frame House

If I lived in a frame house, my house would be built from trees cut into lumber. Lumber is made from trees that have been cut into boards or planks. Lumber was cut at sawmills. Some communities had sawmills, but many did not. Railroads brought the lumber to many settlers.

Frame homes get their name because the lumber is nailed together to form an open frame. The frame then is covered with boards to form solid walls.

Frame houses usually had more than one room. They were nice and warm and clean. Before it was made into houses, lumber was loaded onto trains to be moved. Settlers could build frame houses once railroads came to Kansas. Railroads brought the lumber to the settlers.

The railroad was very important to Kansas. Trains carried lumber and other supplies for building homes. Settlers could build homes like those they had before they came to Kansas. They did not have to use only natural resources. They could build bigger and better houses anywhere in the state that was near the railroad. Settlers built towns and filled them with new frame houses.

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Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas State Historical Society collections
- Andrzej Meikarek (Log Cabin card back)
- Gene Berryman (Sod House back)
- Nebraska State Historical Society collections, digital ID NBHIBS 11158 (Dugout card front)
- Andreas Vitting (Dugout card back)

Name: _____

Prairie Homes

Worksheet

1. A house built from trees is called a

_____.

2. A house built from sod is called a

_____.

3. A house built from dirt is called a

_____.

4. A house built from lumber is called a

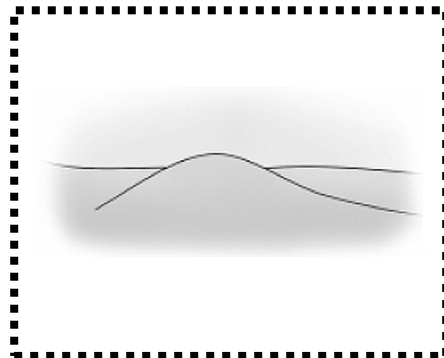
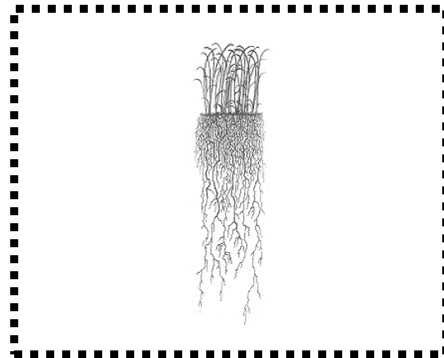
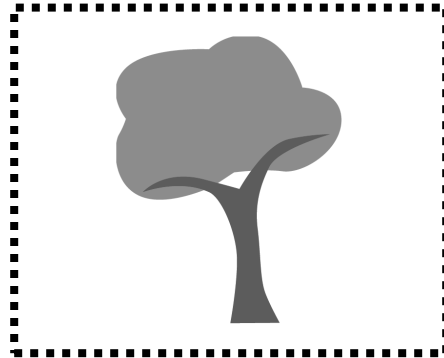
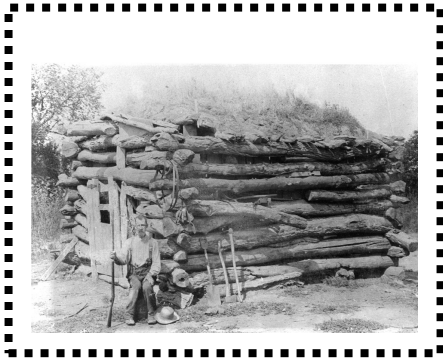
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Word Bank:

dugout
frame house
log cabin
sod house

Prairie Homes

Memory Game



Name: _____

Where did they live?

Map Worksheet

